

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELFAS 00420 021423Z

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FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1510

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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USNAVVOMMSTA LONDON DERRY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT.UK, EI

SUBJECT: SUBSURFACE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. ON SURFACE IT SEEMS POLITICS LARGELY DORMANT IN NORTHERN IRELAND WITH PUBLIC ATTENTION CONCENTRATED ON CONTINUING VIOLENCE AND ON DEVELOPMENTS IN PEACE MOVEMENT. THESE INCLUDE AWARD OF SOME 200,000 POUNDS STERLING FROM NORWEGIAN DONATIONS, AND RECOGNITION DECEMBER 1 OF FOUR NORTHERN IRELAND "PEOPLE OF THE YEAR" INCLUDING WILLIAMS, CORRIGAN AND SEAN COONEY BY DUBLIN GROUP. CONSIDERABLE LOCAL MEDIA ATTENTION ALSO BEING GIVEN TO PRESENCE OF 107 AMERICANS ON "JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION" ORGANIZED BY FATHER DAVID BOWMAN FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. HOWEVER THERE CONSIDERABLE ACTIVITY BELOW SURFACE WITH INDIVIDUAL POLITICIANS PRESENTING THEIR IDEAS AND POSITIONS.

2. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY FACES STORMY CONFERENCE THIS WEEKEND AT NEWCASTLE, COUNTY DOWN WHEN RELATED MOTIONS (A) CALLING FOR BRITISH GOVERNMENT STATEMENT OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW AND (B), APPROVING INDEPENDENCE, WILL BE DEBATED AMONG OTHERS. LEADERSHIP IS EXPECTED TO OPPOSE AND UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BELFAS 00420 021423Z

CAUSE DEFEAT THESE RANK-AND-FILE PROPOSALS BUT PARTY UNITY

COULD BE AFFECTED.

3. ON OTHER SIDE, JOHN TAYLOR, OFFICIAL UNIONIST, HAS ISSUED SCATHING ATTACK ON "FARCE OF DIRECT RULE." HE LISTED FAILURES, BEGINNING WITH SECURITY POLICY AND SUGGESTED COOPERATION WITH ULSTER LOYALIST CENTRAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE (ULCCC) TO CONCENTRATE PARAMILITARY ENERGY ON POLITICAL ATTITUDES RATHER THAN VIOLENCE. TAYLOR ALSO HINTED AT SOME FORM OF DIRECT ACTION TO OPPOSE DIRECT RULE. LOCALLY THIS IS INTERPRETED TO MEAN A TAX AND RENT STRIKE. TAYLOR SUGGESTION HAS RECEIVED FAVORABLE RESPONSE FROM ULSTER DEFENSE ASSOCIATION (NOT A MEMBER OF ULCCC) AND FROM ERNEST BAIRD, LEADER OF UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST MOVEMENT. CONGEN BELIEVES BAIRD MASTER-MINDED ULSTER WORKER COUNCIL STRIKE THAT BROUGHT DOWN POWER-SHARING EXECUTIVE IN 1974. IT NOTED OFFICIAL UNIONIST PARTY POLICY OPPOSES ANY COOPERATION WITH PARA-MILITARIES.

4. THERE ALSO DISARRAY IN PAISLEY DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY. LAST WEEKEND PAARTY SECRETARY PETER ROBINSON CALLED FOR FEDERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND. IT STILL NOT CLEAR WHETHER CALL HAD APPROVAL OF PARTY LEADERSHIP, I.E. PAISLEY. ONE LOCAL POLITICIAN, ENOCH POWELL SEEMS TO HAVE WEATHERED HIS PROBLEMS AS HIS SOUTH DOWN OFFICIAL UNIONIST CONSTITUENCY HAS GIVEN HIM VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.
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